Dakota Wellness Program
October 2018

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Taking care of chronic pain

Pain signals are our body’s way of alerting us to and protecting us from injury or illness. However, pain lasting longer than three months is considered chronic. It can actually re-wire your nervous system, amplifying both the pain itself, and the stress that comes with it. If you suffer from chronic pain, you are not alone.

Over 25 million Americans suffer from this debilitating cycle. It can lead to sleeplessness, anxiety, inactivity, isolation and depression — and put you at risk for various health issues and chronic disease. Pain medications can eventually become ineffective or even worsen the pain. Nevertheless, even if you have been suffering for years, there is hope.

A comprehensive lifestyle treatment plan can break the complex cycle. Part of that is redirecting your focus to what you can do, instead of what you cannot.

- Start with your primary care physician to address possible underlying health issues or injuries.
- Reestablish purpose, strengths and goals, which can both energize and motivate you.
- Assess your daily habits like food, hydration, stress, sleep and exercise.
- Plan for frequent movement and breaks to generate circulation.
- Work with a personal trainer or physical therapist to restore strength and mobility.
- Try a mindfulness program or cognitive therapy to reestablish thought patterns and build relaxation pathways.

Book Club

Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness by John Kabat-Zinn

This landmark book on mindfulness, meditation and healing has been used by health professionals for more than 25 years. The methods are medically proven mind and body approaches derived from meditation and yoga to reduce stress, balance the mind and body, and stimulate healing.

Integrating mindfulness into your daily life can help you to manage chronic pain, reduce feelings of anxiety, and improve your overall quality of life, relationships and career. Full Catastrophe Living is a book for the young and old, ill and well, and anyone trying to lead a stable life in a busy world.

Discussion questions

1. How has this book changed how you think about pain and stress?
2. What techniques have been most beneficial and how?
3. What areas of your well-being have been most impacted by stress or pain? How can they be improved?
4. How will you practice the techniques moving forward?
Give it a try...

Measure your financial well-being

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau uses 10 questions to help you assess the current state of your financial health. Examining your ability to pay for unexpected expenses, prepare for the financial future and live with your financial resources, can help you see which areas may need some improvement.

After taking the quiz, resources are available as your next step:

- Worksheets like a spending tracker or debt log
- Tips and education on student loans, mortgages and credit cards
- Finding a financial expert to talk to

Go to consumerfinance.gov to learn more and to take the quiz.

Lifestyle choices for brain health

We’re familiar with the fact that healthy lifestyle choices help manage weight and fend off chronic disease, but did you know that those same choices can also increase mental sharpness and decrease fatigue? Brain health and energy are affected by how we eat, sleep and move.

Certain nutrients are power players when it comes to brain health. Healthy unsaturated fats, especially omega-3 fatty acids, are one of them. They’ve been shown to support brain function and aid with stress management and are found in foods like salmon and nuts.

Antioxidants help protect cells from the wear and tear of life. They’re found in colorful fruits and vegetables like blueberries, strawberries, asparagus and sweet potatoes – one of the many reasons you should make them half your plate.

Proper hydration increases efficiency of nutrients being delivered to the brain, leading to better mental alertness, while too much sugar, often found in sugary drinks, creates ups and downs in blood sugar and leads to sluggishness.

Power up the brain with physical activity, which increases blood flow, then sleep soundly at night to let it repair and rest.

Tips to volunteering

Improve your overall well-being and health by giving back to your community. The act of volunteering can be the difference between a good life and a great one. Get started today with inspiration below.

Getting started

1. Tell co-workers, friends and family you want to volunteer.
2. Research causes and issues you strongly care about.
3. Reflect on your strengths, skills and hobbies to use while giving back.
4. Call local organizations and ask if they have volunteering opportunities.
5. Dial 211 to connect with opportunities in your local community

Activity ideas

1. Participate in a local run or walk event that supports a cause you care about.
2. Set-up a default donation from each paycheck to your local United Way.
3. Organize a worksite volunteer event for employees to do together.
4. Celebrate a birthday or anniversary by donating to a local charity.
5. Help a neighbor by doing a task that they would normally do themselves.
Activate!
CURABLE FOR PAIN AND MIGRAINE APP

Meet Clara, your smart coach to guide you through the latest in pain science. This app uses fun audio lessons and monthly interviews with medical experts to help you understand the science of pain.

Other features include:
- Building a pain profile
- Training for quick pain relief during flare ups
- Motivation through inspirational stories

The app also features a monthly subscription option that includes meditation and mindfulness tools, writing exercises and brain training techniques to unlearn pain patterns and retrain the nervous system.

The app is available for iOS and Android.

For more information and to learn the science behind the app visit curablehealth.com.

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Monthly Observances
Children's Health
Domestic Violence
Health Literacy
Healthy Lung
Healthy Babies
Breast Cancer
Bullying Prevention
Depression and Mental Health Screening
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
7-13—Mental Illness
15-21—Health Education
20—World Osteoporosis
29—World Stroke

Find a complete list of observances at healthfinder.gov/NHO

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Pumpkin seed energy bites
Serves: 30
Total Time: 40 min | Prep: 10 min

Ingredients:
- 1 cup old fashioned oats
- ½ cup ground flax seed
- ¼ cup chocolate chips
- ½ cup pumpkin seeds
- ¼ craisins or dried fruit of your choice
- ½ cup smooth natural peanut butter
- 1/3 cup honey
- 2 teaspoons vanilla

Directions:
In medium sized bowl, mix together oats, flaxseed, chocolate chips, pumpkin seeds and dried fruit. Add wet ingredients peanut butter, honey and vanilla to dry ingredients. Mix together until seeds, chips and fruit are evenly distributed. Roll into small 1 inch sized balls by hand and place on plate. Refrigerate for 30 minutes before eating to help the balls firm up. Keep refrigerated until ready to eat.

Nutrition Facts:
- Calories: 93
- Total Fat: 5g
- Sodium: 22mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 10g
- Dietary Fiber: 2g
- Total Protein: 3g

Nutrition information compiled using nutritiondata.com

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Information contained in this newsletter does not substitute as medical advice.

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sanfordhealthplan.com/ndpers

SET-UP A mySanfordHealthPlan ONLINE ACCOUNT
sanfordhealthplan.com/memberlogin